

FINAL

Extraordinary Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group Meeting 29 August 2014 - Gatwick Airport

Present:

Tom Denton	GAL (Chair)
Charles Kirwan-Taylor	GAL
Lee Howes	GAL
Terry Gibbons	GAL
Louise Faber	GAL
Emma Simpson	NATS
Tamara Goodwin	DfT
Douglas Moule	AOC
John Byng	GATCOM
Matthew Balfour	GATCOM
Charles Yarwood	GATCOM
Colin Moffatt	GATCOM
Brian Cox	Crawley Borough Council

Apologies:

Stewart Wingate	GAL
Brendan Sheil	GAL
Tim May	DfT
David Raine	CAA
Andy Taylor	NATS
Nigel Owen	NATS
Alan Jones	GATCOM
Liz Kitchen	GATCOM
Ros Howell	GATCOM – Independent Technical Advisor
Mike George	GATCOM
Peter Long	Reigate & Banstead Borough Council

1. The meeting opened at 10:15 and Tom Denton invited members of the group to introduce themselves and outlined the purpose of the meeting which was to establish the facts in terms of consultations, airspace trials and increased flights in order to dispel the current widely-held beliefs within the community that something has changed procedurally at Gatwick Airport.

2. Tom Denton advised that this meeting will have 2 agenda items: perception of changes to aircraft arrivals and pre and post ADNID analysis. He also made reference to a note from the CAA outlining their position on airspace change and current practice which will be provided to the group later.

Item 1 - Westerly Arrivals

3. Tom Denton advised the group that there is a lot of activity regarding westerly arrivals (Crowborough, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Heathfield among others) that there has been a change to arrivals routine. Local activists and members of parliament have been making a significant amount of complaints and representation to the airport which make reference to

the establishment of a 'superhighway' between the holding stacks and the 26L ILS. This has been described by some as a concentrated funnel from the holding stacks via Crowborough to Chiddingstone.

4. Tom Denton reiterated that there is no 'superhighway' in place, and no changes to navigational practices or procedures relating to how aircraft are vectored onto final approach. Tom Denton then presented the meeting with a series of slides illustrating aircraft tracks over a 2 month period (July and August) comparing 2014 to 2013.

5. As the Chair was providing an overview of the aircraft tracks, John Byng enquired as to the timescale of the tracks being presented. Tom Denton clarified that it was 24 hours worth, to which John Byng suggested that 4 hours worth of tracks taken during the peak hours might better reveal any patterns. John Byng explained that people may be more sensitive to aircraft noise if they are overflown often within a short timeframe.

6. John Byng observed that within the random inbound routes there appears to be concentrations of aircraft tracks towards the holding stacks in particular to which Douglas Moule advised that these concentrations are in fact the standard arrival routes to the holding stacks in his experience aircraft are flying at some 15,000 feet. Emma Simpson stated that from the holding stack to the ILS aircraft are vectored randomly for purposes of separation and it is purely coincidental that there is overlap of radar tracks across the day.

7. John Byng advised the group that in his opinion people are now sensitised to aircraft noise to which Tom Denton enquired as to why they were not sensitised in 2013, but are in 2014 and are saying that something has changed this year. John Byng responded by saying that once people are sensitised and made angry, their powers of observation and accurate expression alter and that they are now simply expressing how they feel. He felt that the airport were wrong to concentrate on errors in peoples complaints and should concentrate instead on what had caused people to become angry and disturbed. He also went on to say that people simply do not believe the airport as a result of the 2 recent disgraceful consultation exercises and Gatwick Airport only has itself to blame.

8. Tom Denton advised the group that last year there was an approximate 50/50 split between easterly/westerly operations, whereas this year (to date) it is approximately 24/76 which represents a significant change, furthermore in August we are experienced approximately 78% westerly operations to which Douglas Moule remarked that this year we are experiencing a more normal split. John Byng commented that traffic has increased considerably since 2011 which was masked last year by an increased proportion of easterly operations.

9. Matthew Balfour observed that a 'perfect storm' has occurred due to the second runway debate, the various consultation exercises, increased traffic, the weather factors (easterlies/westerlies) and flight path trials. He went on to say people have noticed the increase in air traffic and are concerned and overall there is an increased awareness. Tom Denton responded by saying that people think the changes detailed in the consultations have happened when they have not. People in areas previously overflown are protesting strenuously that they have never been overflown before and he finds this difficult to reconcile. John Byng reiterated that people, even if annoyed by 1 aircraft, become sensitised. Charles Kirwan-Taylor accepted this and clarified that the purpose of this meeting is to address why people think something has changed as GAL wishes to put to rest the accusation that we have been less than truthful in our activities in order to allow a more accurate platform for onward

discussion. Matthew Balfour acknowledged this however he feels that is simply too late. He agrees what Gatwick is saying is truthful to which John Byng added that GAL does not need to convince NATMAG but the local communities. Charles Yarwood commented that individuals probably kept quiet last year despite their unhappiness, however this year they have a voice.

10. Tom Denton said that GAL has observed a significant amount of cross-over from the various pressure groups, for example westerly communities complaining about flight path trials (which only affected easterly communities). In light of previous consultations people are drawing the wrong conclusions however they do have a more organised voice. We are hoping that the community representatives of NATMAG can feed back to their communities the facts as they stand and to help clarify the various misunderstandings. At this stage, John Byng advised the group that considering Gatwick's Flight Performance Team will no longer correspond with him regarding the matter of go arounds over the town of Crawley, then Gatwick can 'get stuffed'. Tom Denton responded by saying the matter of go arounds over Crawley has been discussed at great length both in writing and orally within NATMAG and there is nothing further that can be added to that. Matthew Balfour mentioned that he did not believe that we are the 'right audience' for this meeting to which Tom Denton replied that an extraordinary meeting of NATMAG was requested by Councillor Rupert Simmons of East Sussex County Council. Matthew Balfour replied that it was his understanding that Councillor Simmons wanted a separate meeting with GAL, NATS, CAA, DfT, etc in attendance.

11. Matthew Balfour stated that with the forthcoming local and general elections there will be increased activism from elected members therefore the 'politicians' cannot support Gatwick in the way that GAL would like them to. Charles Kirwan-Taylor said GAL was not asking them to, what we were asking them to do was to combat the recurring theme that something has changed, GAL was being less than truthful and to confirm a basis of fact to allow discussions to move forward. He made the observation that in 2013 there still remained less flights than 2009. Matthew Balfour advised that the activist groups are now gaining increased support from the wider population to which Charles Yarwood commented that he will take the facts away to his community. Matthew Balfour mentioned that when aircraft do not fly directly overhead they can still be seen and heard by people to which John Byng added this can cause people to become sensitised and fearful of a second runway etc.

Item 2 - ADNID Trial

12. Tom Denton advised the group that there is a widely held belief within the community that the ADNID Trial is continuing so it is his intention to provide an overview of pre-ADNID non-PRNAV departures, ADNID departures and post-ADNID PRNAV departures in order to provide the facts.

13. Tom Denton mentioned that in the days following the cessation of the ADNID Trial there had been some unusual weather systems including localised thunderstorms which resulted in a number of weather deviations which resulted in aircraft flying a route very similar to the former ADNID path. Emma Simpson stated that this is nothing new. John Byng enquired that if aircraft are vectored off a route due to weather, do they use PRNAV? Douglas Moule responded with a definite 'no'.

14. John Byng asked if any aircraft have flown the ADNID flight path by accident since the trial finished. Tom Denton informed the meeting that he was not aware of any such instances. Emma Simpson explained that the ADNID route was removed from ATC flight planning systems

at 23:59 on 8 Aug 2014 therefore it is not possible to offer this departure clearance to aircraft. John Byng advised the meeting that he had checked the flight paths on Casper after the trial had ended and saw a track that looked very similar to an ADNID departure. It was explained by Emma Simpson that this was a standard weather deviation and made reference to John Byng's previous assertion that people were becoming sensitised. She went on to say that in the event of weather deviations aircraft will be looking to re-join the traffic routes to the south of the aerodrome and concluded by reiterating that from a NATS perspective aircraft cannot be offered ADNID as a flight plan to which Douglas Moule added that aircraft cannot fly it by accident.

15. Charles Yarwood enquired of the possibility of the ADNID flight path being introduced on a permanent basis. Tom Denton responded that IPSOS Mori are currently compiling a report based on the consultation feedback which will be provided to GAL in Sep 2014 for consideration. GAL confirmed it will not seek to present an airspace change proposal to the CAA this year, however this may take place during 2015. Any such airspace change proposal may or may not contain an ADNID or similar flight path option. Matthew Balfour commented that there are many calls for Gatwick to re-run their consultation as people were not aware of it, therefore GAL would need to publicise any airspace change proposal whilst being mindful that 7 May 2015 is likely to be a very busy day (local and general elections).

16. Tom Denton provided the meeting with a statement from the CAA detailing their position:

["As the consultation feedback analysis is ongoing, GAL has yet to determine the outcome of the consultation; the CAA can advise that no changes have been made to existing flight paths where aircraft are routinely vectored onto final approach \(Appendix E to the First consultation showed the track dispersion and altitudes of existing arriving traffic\). Only after the sponsors have provided an Airspace Change Proposal \(ACP\) to the CAA are we able to analyse the ACP in accordance with CAP725 process, assess the consultation and the ACP proposal and then make a regulatory decision, having taken into account the proposals in the consultation document, the feedback received and the proposal submitted. In the meantime, the CAA is unable to comment on any aspect of the consultation other than to say that no changes to flight paths have been implemented."](#)

17. Matthew Balfour stated that concerned individuals should be writing to the CAA and the DfT as it is Ministers who make the decisions. Tamara Goodwin responded by saying that the DfT will not comment on this because they do not want to prejudice the outcome of the consultation. Furthermore the DfT only decide on the location of noise preferential routes and any significant changes. She concluded by saying that any airspace change does require a proposal however the level of consultation is determined by the level of change.

18. Charles Yarwood reported that a significant amount of Mole Valley residents (the Holmwoods, Leigh and Capel) are complaining about the effects of the introduction of PRNAV to aircraft departures and in particular the 26LAM-DVR-CLN route. Tom Denton advised that we publicly consulted in 2012 and attended local community meetings, some of which the CAA also attended. He presented a slide showing the resultant change due to PRNAV and advised that these areas were previously overflowed and that the introduction of PRNAV has concentrated the traffic. Matthew Balfour advised that people say they have never heard of these consultations to which Tom Denton responded saying that the feedback from the consultations was published and we acted fully in line with the stated guidelines and the CAA

agreed the change to which John Byng mentioned that the CAA is obliged to review these changes in light of the impact which, in his opinion, is greater than expected.

19. Charles Yarwood posed a question to the group that he himself is often asked: why are we changing airspace when we may have to do so again in the event of a second runway being built? Tom Denton replied by saying if we built a second runway it would not be operational until 2025 at the earliest. Therefore we are doing these changes now in order to gain full environmental benefit in advance of any potential second runway.

20. John Byng asked if GAL are telling people that the concentration of flight paths are required under EU environmental directives. Tom Denton explained that EU directives feed into the Future Airspace Strategy (FAS) and that the EU SESAR (Single European Sky) sets the targets for FAS. John Byng said that Gatwick are not telling the truth and that PRNAV is supportive of FAS and SESAR to which Charles Kirwan-Taylor clarified that concentration and PRNAV are necessary rather than required under the EU directive.

21. The meeting closed at 11:25.